

Implementation Sub-Committee of The Task Force on Federal Legislation Of the Children's Cabinet

MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2005

- 1. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 AM.**
- 2. The 7/8/05 minutes were reviewed and approved as written.**
- 3. Project Opportunity Update**

Donalda Carlson discussed Project Opportunity and the recent program awards issued. Donalda reminded the group that Project Opportunity is part of the Adult Education Programs offered by the Department of Education and funded by the Department of Human Services. FIP participants attend these programs designed for them but may attend any adult education program that is appropriate to them. They are not limited to the Project Opportunity Programs.

Diane Cook, who was actively involved in the overall development of the Adult Education RFP process, distributed a list of providers who received grant awards thus far and briefly explained that anyone who has not yet received their actual award has been notified and will be ready to work with FIP parents very soon.

4. Supported Employment/Transitional Jobs - Diane Cook

Diane Cook presented a Supported Employment/Transitional Jobs progress report on program activity through August 2005. Diane noted that the high no show rate for clients referred was continuing and was at 89% in July.

Brenda Dan Messier suggested that the program might need to be redesigned to focus more funding on the up front services. Donalda responded that the program adjustment had already been made due to the start up issues but that since the programs had been awarded in a competitive process they could not be dramatically changed. The goal of these projects was to offer programming appropriate to the long- term FIP recipients. The task requires regular follow up with the clients and continuous reengagement.

Concern was raised as the ability of the program providers to be able to attain the retention benchmark and receive final payment.

Brenda and others urged that the programs be continued and modified to respond to client needs as necessary. DHS was urged to stay the course and build on those strategies that were found to be successful.

Sue Perlmutter noted that a job placement rate range of 18% to 28% was considered in the literature to be fairly good. She said that there were standards placement and retention rates that could be used to measure program effectiveness. She asked further what do we know about the no show population.

June noted that the anecdotal information shows in some cases that folks don't care if they are sanctioned for non-compliance.

Diane noted that the agency with more experience in providing social and mental health services and that made home visits as part of their program strategy was the most successful in engaging clients.

Donalda noted that the other programs did not do home visits for several reasons, one of which is due to the fact that some of these agency staff felt uncomfortable with providing home visits, some by virtue of agency policy, are not allowed to do home visits, while others have stated that they don't see the need because they are willing and do, meet FIP parents within their respective communities, at coffee shops, at work sites, and at their offices. This issue had been discussed during several meetings with the providers and since it was not mandated as part of the contract, it has only been done as part of the usual service approach by one of the five providers.

A question was raised by one of the Task Force members about the possibility of adding it to the next program year contracts. Donalda responded that we currently have 2-year contracts but that the question would be further considered and perhaps, amend contracts to require home visits if the situation were appropriate. It may raise questions about the need to assign no less than 2 people to make home visits together and that could translate into a higher cost per participant. The Department staff agreed to further examine this issue over the next 2 months.

The discussion was halted to be continued after the presentation by

Johan Uvin.

5. Johan Uvin – Director of Adult Education

Mr. Uvin, the new Director of Adult Education, presented his thoughts on adult education and his agenda as the new director. He first spoke about the need to develop a more integrated approach to adult education. He noted that there were many programs for adult learners that were offered by a variety of providers and that there needed to be an integration of the programs and the funding streams to maximize the educational impact of adult education in Rhode Island. He proceeded to present objectives that he would be working on in the coming year in an attempt to build critical program links.

5.1 Better coordination of delivery of services.

5.2 Establish program standards adhered to by all adult education programs.

5.3 Offer professional development opportunities. There is a draft model for a professional development being prepared and it may be in place by the end of this fiscal year.

Mr. Uvin presented his initial priorities as he begins his new position.

a) Develop learning standards based on learning the skills needed to get ahead.

b) Develop learning opportunities presented in classes that are well taught and well run by teachers that are well supported.

c) Implement a professional development structure.

d) Develop a structure for accountability. Rhode Island is and has

been out of compliance with Federal adult education report requirements. He proposes a web based reporting system that will facilitate data collection.

Mr. Uvin stated that we need to begin to reward high performing programs and to close those that despite extensive technical assistance continue to be ineffective.

Donalda asked Mr. Uvin if there could be a change in the scheduling of adult education programs. Most of the programs currently follow the academic calendar. This needs to be changed to a 12 month calendar of operation. Adults need to progress quickly particularly those in the Family Independence Program who have only 24 to 36 months at most to achieve the academic learning necessary before they are required to enter into employment. Mr. Uvin said he understood the issue and that in principle he agreed but that he would have to take the issue back to his department to determine the feasibility of such a modification. He said that his philosophy was that the participant was at the center of service and that program decisions should be based on that principle.

Brenda asked how did he plan to address the low literacy levels in Rhode Island. He answered that he was proposing to develop a certificate of mastery for those beginning at a low level of literacy.

Molly Soum asked how many of his staff was of Southeast Asian descent. He said that he had a staff of three and that he was in the

process of hiring new staff.

Item 4. Supported Employment/Transitional Jobs Continued

Sue Perlmutter continued the discussion of how to deal with the high no-show rate. She suggested that there should be incentives to participate and consequences for non-compliance.

Linda suggested that a small review committee be constituted to look at the programs in depth. Volunteers to participate on this subgroup were requested.

6. Report On New England Regional TANF Administrators' Meeting

Donalda reported that the meeting was dominated by discussion of disaster relief due to hurricane Katrina. Guidance was given on relief efforts.

Other discussion centered on the future of TANF and on possible changes in TANF such as increased participation requirements, types of activities that would be allowed. There was discussion of how to best meet participation requirements while best meeting the needs of the clients and how to address full engagement.

Joy Tinker reported that all versions of TANF reauthorization contained the fostering of healthy relationships. There will be money available for healthy marriage initiatives. The caseload credit will be

eliminated. There might be a lengthening of the time that will be allowed for educational activity.

Linda said that she would draft a letter on be half of the task force that would be addressed to the RI Congressional Delegation as well as to the Governor to express the group's concerns about TANF reauthorization.

Next meeting on October 7, 2005.

Respectfully submitted,

Gabriella Barros